

## Message Text

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11

ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 INR-05

CIAE-00 L-01 IGA-01 TRSE-00 /038 W

----- 093357

P 220655Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4396

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0338

LIMDIS

CINCPAC PASS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB AND  
AMBASSADOR HOLDRIDGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SN

SUBJECT: TRAINING ASSISTANCE FOR SINGAPORE

REFS: (A) SINGAPORE 0316; (B) SECDEF 172059Z JAN 76

(C) STATE 237704 (OCT. 6, 1975).

1. BEGIN SUMMARY PERMANENT SECRETARY MINDEF,  
PANG TEE POW, INFORMED CHARGE JANUARY 21 THAT COST OF  
FORT BRAGG COUNTERINSURGENCY COURSE IS UNACCEPTABLY  
HIGH AND THAT GOS MUST OF NECESSITY DROP THE WHOLE IDEA  
UNLESS THERE IS MAJOR REDUCTION IN COST. PANG SAID  
MINISTER OF DEFENSE GOH HAD COMMENTED THAT HIGH COST  
WAS NOT IN KEEPING WITH SPIRIT OF CONVERSATIONS HELD  
BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER LEE AND SENIOR USG OFFICIALS. IN  
VIEW SECDEF POSITION SET FORTH REF B, THERE WOULD APPEAR  
TO BE VIRTUALLY NO LIKELIHOOD OF USG RECONSIDERING COST  
IN TIME TO PERMIT ITS SCHEDULING IN MARCH. THEREFORE, DAO  
IS ADVISING ALL OFFICES CONCERNED WITH PREPARING COURSE  
THAT IT SHOULD BE SHELVED FOR TIME BEING. IN VIEW OF  
PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN COURSE, EMBASSY  
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BELIEVES HE MAY EXPRESS HIS DISAPPOINTMENT OVER COST TO

USG AT HIGH LEVEL AND REQUEST RECONSIDERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE, PANG TEE POW, CALLED IN CHARGE JANUARY 21 TO GIVE GOS RESPONSE TO ACTING DATT'S PRESENTATION TO DIRECTOR OF GENERAL STAFF OF COST FIGURES FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY COURSE AT FORT BRAGG (REF A). DIRECTOR OF GENERAL STAFF, COLONEL CHOO, AND ACTING DATT, COL. FOSTER, WERE PRESENT DURING MEETING. PANG SAID MINISTER OF DEFENSE GOH HAD REVIEWED FIGURES SUBMITTED BY ACTING DATT AND DECIDED THAT THE COST OF THIS COURSE WAS UNACCEPTABLY HIGH AND THAT REGRETFULLY GOS MUST TURN IT DOWN UNLESS MAJOR REDUCTION IN TOTAL COST CAN BE MADE. FROM PANG'S COMMENTS, IT WAS CLEAR GOS HAD ASSUMED THAT COST FOR FOUR-WEEK COURSE WOULD BE WELL BELOW \$100,000. PANG SAID DR. GOH HAD COMMENTED THAT THE HIGH COST WAS NEITHER IN KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH PRIME MINISTER LEE HAD HAD WITH SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON NOR WITH THE TENOR OF DISCUSSIONS DURING ADMIRAL CROWE AND MR. SHACKLEY'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE IN JULY. PANG SAID DR. GOH PLANNED TO CABLE PRIME MINISTER LEE (CURRENTLY VISITING HONG KONG AND NOT SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO SINGAPORE UNTIL JANUARY 26) TO ADVISE HIM OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.

3. CHARGE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT GOS CONSIDERED COST TO BE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH, BUT NOTED THAT SINCE ORIGINAL DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS AND SUBSEQUENT CROWE/ SHACKLEY VISIT TO SINGAPORE CONGRESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS HAD NECESSITATED THAT DOD RECOVER THE FULL COST OF ALL EXPENSES INVOLVED IN ALL TRAINING INCLUDING THE PROPORTIONATE PART OF THE SALARIES OF PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN PREPARING, DIRECTING AND TEACHING THE COURSE. FURTHERMORE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY HAD DONE ITS UTMOST TO DEVELOP A COURSE OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY, WHICH HAD INVOLVED PULLING TOGETHER EXPERTISE FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES. INEVITABLY A ONE-TIME COURSE DESIGNED FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE COST CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN A STANDARD COURSE WHICH WAS PRESENTED RECURRENTLY. CHARGE NOTED THAT AMBASSADOR HOLDRIDGE HAD ALSO BEEN CONCERNED

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THAT THE COST FIGURES WERE HIGHER THAN ANTICIPATED, AND BEFORE ALLOWING THEM TO BE PRESENTED TO MINDEF HAD REQUESTED A HIGH LEVEL REVIEW BY RELEVANT WASHINGTON AGENCIES TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE COST COULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS CAREFUL REVIEW HAD SHOWN THAT GIVEN THE NEW CONGRESSIONAL CONSTRAINTS IT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN COST IF THE COURSE WAS REDUCED TO TWO OR THREE WEEKS.

THEREFORE, TWO OTHER OPTIONS HAD BEEN DEVELOPED WHICH WERE SIGNIFICANTLY LESS EXPENSIVE AND WHICH HAD BEEN PRESENTED BY THE ACTING DATT TO COLONEL CHOO.

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 INR-05

CIAE-00 L-01 IGA-01 TRSE-00 EA-06 /038 W  
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P 220655Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4397

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0338

LIMDIS

CINCPAC PASS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB AND  
AMBASSADOR HOLDRIDGE

4. PANG AND COLONEL CHOO DISPLAYED NO INTEREST IN THE LOWER COST OPTIONS PRESENTED, BUT NOTED THAT IF THE GOS ACCEPTED THE FOUR-WEEK COURSE (WHICH FULLY MET GOS EXPECTATIONS AS FAR AS CONTENT WAS CONCERNED) THE COST WOULD REPRESENT 80 PERCENT OF SINGAPORE'S ENTIRE OVERSEAS MILITARY TRAINING BUDGET. THIS WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE SINCE THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR WAS APPROACHING AND MINDEF WAS ALREADY FACED WITH THE PROSPECT OF HAVING TO SEEK A \$55 MILLION SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FROM PARLIAMENT. THE MINISTER HAD COMMENTED THAT IT WAS REGRETTABLE THAT HE HAD TO TURN DOWN SUCH AN EXCELLENT COURSE, BUT OTHER ESSENTIAL TRAINING NEEDS HAD TO BE CONSIDERED AND COULD NOT BE SLASHED FOR THE SAKE OF ONE FOUR-WEEK COURSE AT FORT BRAGG.

5. PANG THEN QUERIED WHETHER IT WOULD BE AT ALL POSSIBLE FOR THE U.S. TO CONSIDER PROVIDING MAP TRAINING TO SINGAPORE ON A GRANT BASIS AS IT DID FOR SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. CHARGE

REPLIED THAT IF GOS WISHED TO SUBMIT SUCH A REQUEST, EMBASSY WOULD, OF COURSE, FORWARD IT TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSIDERATION. HOWEVER, GIVEN CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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CLIMATE WITH RESPECT TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND RISING SINGAPORE FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES WHICH ALREADY AMOUNTED TO APPROXIMATELY US\$ 3 BILLION, HE COULD NOT BE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE GOS REQUEST FOR GRANT MAP TRAINING WOULD MEET WITH A FAVORABLE WASHINGTON RESPONSE, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD, OF COURSE, BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED. PANG DID NOT PURSUE THIS LINE, BUT CONCLUDED THE CONVERSATION BY REITERATING MINDEF'S BUDGETARY PROBLEMS AND STATING THAT GOS MUST OF NECESSITY REJECT THE COURSE AT THE CURRENT COST FIGURE AND COULD ONLY RECONSIDER IT IF THERE WAS A MAJOR REDUCTION.

6. COMMENT ALTHOUGH PANG INDICATED THAT GOS REJECTION OF COURSE MIGHT BE REVERSED IF THERE IS A MAJOR REDUCTION IN COST, ASSUME FROM REF B THAT NO MAJOR COST REDUCTION IS POSSIBLE FOR FOUR-WEEK COURSE. (NEITHER PANG NOR CHOO DISPLAYED AN INTEREST IN LOWER COST TWO-OR THREE-WEEK COURSE OPTIONS). THEREFORE, BY SEPARATE MESSAGE DAO IS ADVISING ALL OFFICES INVOLVED IN PLANNING COURSE OF GOS REJECTION AND RECOMMENDING THAT COURSE BE SHELVED FOR TIME BEING. IF AS RESULT OF ANY FURTHER RECONSIDERATION IT PROVES POSSIBLE TO OFFER COURSE AT MUCH LOWER COST, EMBASSY BELIEVES GOS WOULD STILL BE VERY INTERESTED IN SENDING OFFICERS TO ATTEND IT AT A LATER TIME.

7. IN EMBASSY VIEW, IT IS QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE THAT DR. GOH SHOULD CONSIDER THE HIGH COST OF THE COURSE AS NOT BEING IN KEEPING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS AND THE TENOR OF THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE WHEN THE CROWE/SHACKLEY MISSION VISITED SINGAPORE ALTHOUGH IT WAS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE GOS WOULD PAY FOR THE COURSE AND NO SPECIFIC PROMISES WERE MADE CONCERNING THE COST, THERE WAS NEVER ANY EARLY INDICATION FROM U.S. SIDE THAT THE COURSE WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN OTHER MILITARY TRAINING WHICH GOS OFFICERS HAVE HERETOFORE RECEIVED IN THE U.S. IT IS OF COURSE, EXCEPTIONALLY DIFFICULT FOR THE GOS TO UNDERSTAND HOW CONGRESSIONAL CONSTRAINTS CAN GOVERN THE DETAILED COSTING OF MILITARY TRAINING. AS DEPARTMENT AND OTHER ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, PRIME MINISTER LEE FELT THIS COURSE WAS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF GOS CONFIDENTIAL

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CONCERN OVER POTENTIAL DETERIORATION OF INTERNAL SECURITY  
SITUATION IN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA, AND HE MAY WELL EXPRESS  
HIS DISAPPOINTMENT DIRECTLY TO USG HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS  
AND APPEAL FOR RECONSIDERATION.

8. ASSUME CONSIDERATIONS SET FORTH REF C STILL APPLY AND  
THAT GRANT MAP TRAINING FOR SINGAPORE IS A NON-STARTER.  
GRANT

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
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